

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-09 L-03 NSC-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-09 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 TRSE-00

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P R 232353 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3819

INFO USCINCSO

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTIAGO 1238

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, PINT

SUBJECT: MARCH 4 ELECTIONS IN PERSPECTIVE

REF: SANTIAGO 0932 (NOTAL)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. WHILE OPPOSITION CODE AND GOVERNING UP CONTINUE PARADE RIVAL " VICTORY" CLAIMS, OPPOSITION POLITICIANS ARE ASKING THEMSELVES WHY ALLENDE DID SO WELL. MOST EXPLANATIONS BLAME LESSER IMPACT OF ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ON LOW INCOME VOTERS AND IMPORTANCE OF CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS. INFUX OF FIRST-TIME VOTERS AND " CIVIL WAR" APPREHENSIONS ALSO STRESSED AS FACTORS. RESULTS LEADING PDC TO REAPPRAISE HARD LINE. OTHER IMPLICATIONS INCLUDE SOBERING REFLECTIONS FOR THE MILITARY, POSSIBLE ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE " VIA ELECTORAL" INSIDE UP, PRESSURE ON PDC AND PN TO SPONSOR JOINT CANDIDATE IN 1976, AND PERPETUATION OF LEGISLATIVE IMPASSE. END SUMMARY.

2. POLITICIANS HAVE NOW HAD ALMOST THREE WEEKS TO RUMINATE UPON MAR 4 RESULTS. OUTWARDLY, ALL SIDES HAVE SOUGHT DRAW
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SOME COMFORT FROM THE NUMBERS, AND DEBATE OVER WHO " WON" PERSISTS WITH NO END IN SIGHT. OPPOSITION POLITICIANS PRIVATELY

REGARD ALLENDE FORCES' MEAGER 6 PERCENT DETERIORATION (FROM 50 PERCENT HIGH OF APRIL 1971 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, ACCORDING PRELIMINARY TALLIES WHICH ARE BASIS FOR THIS DISCUSSION) AS MATERIAL SETBACK. HOPES OF BREAKING WHAT MANY HERE CHARACTERIZE AS POLITICAL "STALEMATE" WERE FRUSTRATED. IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT CODE ALLIANCE FOUGHT CAMPAIGN UNDER RELATIVELY FAVORABLE CIRCUMSTANCES-- FINANCING AND MEDIA ACCESS WERE ADEQUATE, ATMOSPHERE WAS AT TIMES TENSE BUT NOT ABNORMAL AND, SEEMINGLY MOST IMPORTANT, ADVERSARY WAS FACED WITH CHILE'S DEEPEST ECONOMIC CRISIS IN DECADES.

3. DESPITE INITIAL OUTCRY OF FRAUD IN VOTE COUNTING PROCESS, AND PN EFFORTS TO RESURENT CHARGES OF DOUBLE REGISTRATION AND STOLEN VOTES, MOST IN OPPOSITION ACCEPT BROAD RESULTS. AT MOST, OPTIMISTS SEE SHIFT OF ONE OR TWO PERCENTAGE POINTS AND A FEW SEATS WHEN OFFICIAL RECOUNT PROCESS CONCLUDES MID- MAY. THERE IS NO ASSURANCE THAT OPPOSITION WILL BE BENEFICIARY OF ALL READJUSTMENTS.

4. OPPOSITION EUPHORIA DURING CAMPAIGN AND UP'S VERY MODESTY COUCHED EXPECTATIONS MAGNIFIED PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF WHAT WAS, AFTER ALL, A DISTINCTLY MINORITY UP VOTE. OPPOSITION MAY INVEIGH AGAINST GOVT'S "NEW MATH" WHICH TRANSMUTES CODE'S CLEAR MAJORITY INTO DEFEAT, BUT FOR TIME BEING LOGIC CONVINCES NEITHER THOSE WHO ACCEPT ALLENDE'S 1970 ELECTION PERCENTAGE (36.6) AS PROPER STANDARD OF COMPARISON, NOR THOSE IN OPPOSITION WHO SAW THEIR EXAGGERATED ASPIRATIONS PUNCTURED.

5. OPPOSITION DISAPPOINTMENT IS COLORED BY RESULTS PRIOR BY- ELECTIONS WHICH SEEMED PORTEND BEGINNING OF AN ACCELERATING ANTI- GOVT TREND. SINCE ITS NARROW VALPARAISO BY- ELECTION VICTORY (JULY 1971), OPPOSITION WON IN LINARES AND O' HIGGINS- COLCHAGUA (JAN 1972), AND IN COQUIMBO (JULY 1972) CUT WELL INTO A UP MARGIN. EXCEPTING VALPARAISO, RESULTS IN BY- ELECTION PROVINCES VARIED LITTLE ON MAR 4 FROM BY- ELECTION RESULTS. COLCHAGUA, INDEED, GAVE UP A SLIGHTLY HIGHER PERCENTAGE THAN A YEAR AGO. IDEA THAT UP MAY HAVE CONTRIVED TO CONTAIN ITS ELECTORAL DESCENT DURING PARTICULARLY TRYING TIMES PERPLEXES ANTI- GOVT LEADERS.

6. A CLOSER LOOK AT PERCENTAGES BY PROVINCES IS REVEALING. UP
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DECLINED EVERYWHERE IN COMPARISON WITH ITS 1971 MUNICIPAL ELECTION SHOWING. HEAVIEST DECLINES (OVER 10 PERCENT) OCCURRED IN UP BASTIONS-- THE THREE NORTHERMOST PROVINCES AND IN FAR SOUTHERN MAGALLANES. UP'S 7-9 PERCENT FALL IN VALPARAISO AND SANTIAGO'S FOUR ELECTORAL DISTRICTS WAS SUBSTANTIAL, BUT BELOW OPPOSITION HOPES. MOST UNPLEASANT RESULT FOR CODE WAS IN AGRICULTURAL PROVINCES OF CENTRAL VALLY WHERE FOR MOST PART IT IMPROVED ONLY marginally OVER 1971.

7. OPPOSITION' S FAILURE TO MAKE HEAVIER GAINS IN AGRARIAN AREA WORRIES BOTH NATIONAL PARTY AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. EVIDENTLY CAMPESINO DISCONTENT WITH ALLENDE GOVT POLICIES WAS LESS SEVERE THAN OPPOSITION LED ITSELF TO BELIEVE. WITH BENEFIT OF HINDSIGHT, PDC TECHNICIANS NOW SAY THEY TOOK CAMPE- SINOS FOR GRANTED, HAVING SHUNTED TO OTHER AREAS THEIR PARTY' S MOST EFFECTIVE AGRARIAN CAMPAIGNERS, PEOPLE LIKE SEN. RAFAEL MORENO AND LAME DUCK DEPUTY EMILIO LORENZINI. MOREOVER, CAMPESINOS' HUNGER FOR OWNERSHIP AND LAND TITLES-- AS DISTINGUISHED FROM DE FACTO POSSESSION-- WAS PROBABLY OVERESTIMATED.

8. ANOTHER PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION FOR DISAPPOINTMENTS IN CENTRAL VALLEY WAS IMPACT OF NEWLY ENFRANCHISED 18-21 AND ILLITERATE VOTERS. AS DEPT WILL RECALL, THIS STRING OF PROVINCES DISPLAYED HIGHEST PROPORTION OF NEW VOTERS, WITH MOST STRIKING CORRELATIONS COMING IN THOSE PROVINCES WITH HIGH ILLITERACY. POLITICIANS RETURNING TO SANTIAGO CONFIRM NEWLY CONSTITUTED VOTING " MESAS" WENT MORE UP THAN THE AVERAGE.

9. PRESUMED HIGHER PROPENSITY OF NEW VOTERS TO FAVOR UP MAY GO PART WAY TOWARDS EXPLAINING WHY UP DID AS WELL AS IT DID COUNTRYWIDE. IT IS INTERESTING THAT CODE REGISTERED BIGGEST GAINS PRECISELY IN THOSE PROVINCES WITH LEAST EXPANSION OF LECTORATE. WHILE WE ARE RELUCTANT ATTRIBUTE OVERWHELMING INFLU- ENCE TO SINGEL " STRUCTURAL" FACTOR, IF WE HYPOTHEZIZE THAT RESIDUAL VOTERS MIGHT HAVE SPLIT 6 0/40 IN FAVOR OF CODE, A 35/65 BREAK FAVORING UP AMONG FIRST- TIME VOTERS (NEARLY 17 PERCENT OF TOTAL) WOULD HAVE SUFFICED TO BRING UP TO ITS 44 PERCENT OF THE VOTE SPLIT BETWEEN THE TWO BLOCS.

10. INTIMATIONS THAT CHILEAN WOMEN SHOWED MORE PROPENSITY TO VOTE UP THAN FORMERLY ARE DISAVOWED BY FIGURES. WOMEN ACCOUNTED FOR 43 PERCENT OF UP' S TOTAL VOTE, ROUGHLY LEVEL OF
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NEARLY A DECADE, AND SOMEWHAT BELOW 1971.

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INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-09 L-03 NSC-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-09 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 TRSE-00

AID-20 PC-04 EB-11 INRE-00 SR-02 ORM-03 RSR-01 /107 W

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P R 232353 Z MAR 73
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3820
INFO USCINCSO
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SANTIAGO 1238

EO 11652: GDS
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REF: SANTIAGO 0932 (NOTAL)

11. MOST AGREE THAT OPPOSITION OVERESTIMATED ELECTORAL IMPACT OF ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. LOWER HALF OF POPULATION IS STILL MATERIALLY BETTER OFF THAN UNDER PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS AND MAY HAVE A GREATER SENSE OF WELL- BEING, EVEN THOUGH WORKERS ARE NOT ABLE TO PURCHASE ALL GOODS HIGHER MONEY WAGES SHOULD PERMIT . OUR CONTACTS FEEL THAT GOVT' S DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM HAS HAD SOME SIGNIFICANT EFFECT IN GETTING CONSUMER GOODS TO LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS AT OFFICIAL PRICES. MOREOVER, THERE IS APPRECIATION THAT TO EXTENT POOR HAVE EXPERIENCED COUNTRY' S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, MANY HEED PERVASIVE UP PROPAGANDA BLAMING " MOMIOS" AND US " ECONOMIC BLOCKADE." GOVERNMENT HAS APPARENTLY MADE SOME PROGRESS IN PERSUADING LOW INCOME CHEILANS THAT UP IS " THEIR GOVERNMENT," AND MANY ARE DOUBTLESS PREPARED PAY SOME ECONOMIC PRICE IN
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RETURN FOR ENHANCED SENSE OF DIGNITY AND SATISFACTION OF PUTTING DOWN UPPER CLASSES. INCOME REDISTRIBUTION, SIPPING- UP OF UNEMPLOYMENT, AND EXPANSION OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND EDUCATION ROUND OUT THIS PACKAGE. SOME ANALYSTS ALSO MENTION EFFECTIVENESS OF ALLENDE CAMPAIGNING IN CLOSING WEEKS, AND IMPACT OF UP PROPAGANDA EQUATING VOTE FOR CODE WITH VOTE FOR CIVIL WAR, BY- PRODUCT OF PN CAMPAIGN VOWS TO " CHANGE THE GOVERNMENT". THAT TRANQUILIZING EFFECT OF MILITARY PRESENCE IN GOVT AIDED UP SEEMS LESS PERSUASIVE. WE INCLINE TO DOUBT THAT OPPOSITION SELF- CONFIDENCE HAD MUCH IMPACT ON VOTE OUTCOME (AS OPPOSED TO PSYCHOLOGICAL AFTERMATH), NOR DO WE SENSE CODE WOULD HAVE DONE BETTER IF IT HAD SOMEHOW DISCOVERED AND ADOPTED A LESS NEGATIVE CAMPAIGN POSTURE, AS SOME PDC SOURCES WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE.

12. IN SUM, MUCH OF THIS HINDSIGHT REASONING IS PLAUSIBLE, BUT IT MAY ALSO BE OVERDRAWN.

13. SOME IN PDC HAVE ALREDY DRAWN LESSON THAT PDC MUST GET MORE IN STEP WITH LOW INCOME VOTERS IF IT AND OPPOSITION IS TO SUCCEED. THIS IS TAKEN TO REQUIRE DROPPING OBSTRUCTION-IST POSTURE AND SEVERANCE OF FORMAL TIES WITH RIGHT. FATAL ALTERNATIVE, THEY FEEL, IS NARROWING ELECTORAL BASE. FEW PDCERS BLAME CODE ELECTORAL FEDERATION FOR DISAPPOINTING SHOWING. MOST OPPOSITIION POLITICIANS SEEM RECOGNIZE THAT THEIR PARTIES RUNNING SEPARATELY WOULD HAVE LOST EVEN MORE SEATS TO UP (BY OUR RECKONGING, SIX MORE IN CHAMBER AND TWO IN SENATE), BUT PRESSURE IS AGAIN ABUILDING WITHIN PDC FOR MORE INDEPENDENT IDENTITY, AND A MORE EVEN- KEELED APPROACH TO GOVT INITIATIVES. PDC " CONSEJO PLENO" SCHEDULED FOR EARLY APRIL AND NATIONAL JUNTA FOLLOWING MONTH WILL NO DOUBT CONCEN-TRATE ON THIS ISSUE. SO FAR PDC' S OFFICIAL STANCE IS THAT NO DECISION REGARDING CODE' S CONTINUATION HAS BEEN TAKEN, THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO " OFFICIAL" CONTACTS MUCH LESS UNDERSTANDINGS WITH UP, THAT GOVT MUST HEED WILL OF MAJORITY EXPRESSED MAR 4, AND THAT PDC WILL SUPPORT ALLENDE ONLY TO EXTENT GOVT INITIATIVES MESH WITH PARTY POSITIONS. ALLENDE, COMMUNISTS AND GENERAL PRATS ARE ENCOURAGING REVIVING LEFTWING PDC UNHAPPINESS WITH HARD LINE , BUT SOCIALISTS ARE ALREADY ON RECORD AS OPPOSED TO ANY UNDERSTANDING WITH PDC OR POLICIES SMACKING OF " CONCILIATION". THESE TWO PARTIES HOLD KEY TO ACCOMMODATION POSSIBILITIES. QUESTION FOR NTH TIME IN PAST TWO YEARS IS
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WHETHER UP CAN MEET PDC HALF- WAY WITHOUT RUNNING EXCESSIVE RISK OF DISMEMBERING ITSELF, AND WHETHER PDC CAN RESIST UP BLANDISHMENTS. UPCOMING SOCIALIST CONGRESS, IN WHICH " MODERATES" MAY CHALLENGE ALTAMIRANO FACTION FOR LEADEERSHIP, THUS ASSUMES MORE THAN ROUTINE SIGNIFICANCE.

14. A NUMBER OF OTHER IMPLICATIONS SEEM EVIDENT:

A. BY DEMONSTRATING THAT UP ELECTORAL VICTORY NOT INCON-CEIVABLE IN 1976, ELECTION RESULTS MAY STRENG-THEN THOSE UP FORCES WHO DEFEND VIABILITY OF ELECTORAL ROUTE TO SOCIALISM.

B. RESULTS CANNOT HELP BUT REAFFIRM ONE OF THE PREOCCUPATIONS WHICH HAUNT THE CHILEAN MILITARY- THAT A SITUATION IN WHICH MORE THAN FOUR OUT OF TEN CHILEAN VOTERS SUPPORTED THE UP MEANS THAT THE MILITARY WOULD BE CONTRONTED BY THE RISK OF LARGE SCALE BLOODY ACTION AGAINST ELEMENTS OF THE CIVIL POPULATION IF IT SHOULD BE
MANEUVERED INTO A STANCE OF PHYSICAL REPRESSION OF THE WHOLE CHILEAN LEFT.

C. NOTWITHSTANDING CONTRADICTIONARY PRESSURES FOR PDC MODERATION, RELATIVELY NARROW ELECTORAL VICTORY IS POWERFUL ARGUMENT AGAINST PDC AND PN " GOING IT ALONE" IN 1976. RADICALISMO'S FAILURE, FURTHERMORE, LEAVES PDC WITHOUT CREDIBLE ALLY ON HORIZON EXCEPT PN. FREI LOOMS MORE AND MORE AS CONSENSUS PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE- IN- WAITING.

D. LEGISLATIVE STALEMATE PERSISTS. EXECUTIVE NEEDS CONSENT OF OPPOSITION MAJORITY ON MOST INITIATIVES OF LAW, AND OPPOSITION STILL UNABLE OVERRIDE ALLENDE VETOES OF ITS OWN LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS. CONSEQUENTLY THERE IS NO EFFECTIVE PROCEDURAL WAY TO BLOCK ALLENDE'S " REVOLUTION BY LOOPHOLES ." HOWEVER, INDEPENDENT FACTORS-- E. G. MILITARY PRESSURE AND FINANCIAL BIND-- MAY IMPOSE OWN RESTRAINTS ON UP'S FREEDOM OF ACTION.

E. EXECUTIVE WILL HAVE MORE DIFFICULT TIME MAKING CASE THAT FRESHLY ELECTED LEGISLATURE IS " UNREPRESENTATIVE."

F. OUTCRY OVER ALLEGED VOTE- TALLYING IRREGULARITIES WILL PROBABLY LEAD TO STREAMLING OF ELECTORAL LEGISLATION. EFFECT
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MAY BE TO REDUCE POSSIBILITY OF GOVT TAMPERING WITH FUTURE ELECTIONS.

G. ALTHOUGH SOME IN OPPOSITION FEEL MORE DESPERATE, KNOWLEDGE THAT SUBSTANTIAL PART OF NATION STILL SUPPORTS GOVT SHOULD INHIBIT SUCH MIDDLE- CLASS PRESSURE PLAYS AS OCT 1972 COMMERCIAL SHUTDOWN. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE IS ALREADY TALK OF POSSIBLE CONFRONTATION ON THE UNIFIED SCHOOL AND A NUMBER OF BREAD- AND- BUTTER ISSUES.

H. ALLENDE MAY NOW SEEM SOMEWHAT BETTER RISK TO SOVIETS. WE ARE STRUCK BY RADIO MOSCOW'S ASSESSMENT OF ELECTION RESULTS (FBIS MAR6)

15. ALLENDE NOW HAS ELECTORAL RESPITE. NEXT SCHEDULED ELECTIONS ARE FULL TWO YEARS OFF (1975 MUNICIPALS) AND PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST IS 3 1/2 YEARS AWAY-- ALTHOUGH SOME SORT OF BY- ELECTIONS ARE ACTUALLY PROBABLE IN THE INTERIM. UP IS FREER TO CONCENTRATE ON ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WITHOUT REGARD TO IMMEDIATE ELECTORAL CONSIDERATIONS. OPPOSITION HAS MORE FLEXIBILITY FOR SAME REASON.

16 THERE ARE ALREADY INDICATIONS THAT OPPOSITION DESPONDENCE IS DISSIPATING AS OTHER ISSUES COME TO FORE, AND AS PARTIES BEGIN CONCENTRATING ON PRACTICAL MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN THEIR ORGANIZATIONS AT GRASS ROOTS. BUT WHILE IT IS TEMPTING TO CONCLUDE THAT ELECTIONS HAVE CHANGED NOTHING, 56-44 IS POLITICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY DIFFERENT FROM 60-40. THE ACTORS HAVE FRESH MEASURE AGAINST WHICH TO CONSIDER NEXT MOVES.

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